

**DNRC Fire Business Management Committee Meeting**  
**January 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Helena, Montana**  
**DNRC Headquarters Bannack Conference Room**

(Please note: action items are highlighted in purple and are located throughout this document.)

**Attendance:** Pam Okon, Matt Hedrick, Jennifer McKay, Jeff Williams, Becky Shepard, Jan Wheeler, Doug Williams, Susan Dowler, Terry Vaughn, Sue Clark, Karel Morales

**Tuesday January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 - 10:00 to 5:00**

**10:30 Welcome**

**10:45 Best Value & Contracting**  
**Rental Cars, Porta-Pots Etc.**  
**Recommendations, Solicitations ETC.**  
**BV Solicitation Plan**

**General Contracting/Solicitations – Jeff**

Jeff handed out the schedule for bids. He's having a hard time getting feedback from folks. Since Swick has retired, someone needs to be at SAC to talk about our solicitation. Perhaps Jeff if they hire him in the position. No problems with sack lunches. Few changes on toilets and wash stations. Thinking of changing the 75 mile radius to 50 miles due to fuel costs. Also thinking of changing minimum for mileage from 5 units or less to 10 units or less. Trying to work out a daily rate that is all inclusive. But there are exceptions where vendors are traveling 200 miles one way to service stations. Since the fires today are so large, we should look at putting something in to address all the mileage when they could be staying at the camp. But that may not be feasible as the vendor must pay his people. Jeff was told by the feds that he had to get daily, weekly and monthly rates. It would be so much easier not to have multi-tier rates. At the next FAC meeting Matt will ask Wesselius if it is true that the feds require this. Otherwise it would be good to have one flat daily rate and a reset rate.

The rental cars are a mess. People are not tracking them well. Another issue is the tires. Jeff talked to them about the need for heavier ply tires. They can't get those heavy ply tires especially for us. Can we say that we don't pay for replacing tires? Jeff will put something in the solicitation that will at least try to address the situation. We did buy a bunch of ATVs which might mitigate some of it. Perhaps we can ask them for a different category (off-road) in which we pay a higher rate. But that would complicate things in finance. As for keeping track of mileage, suggest we have an option for unlimited mileage, but that would be reflective in the price. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year of solicitations and things are getting better with the national chains. Claims were not too bad this year. The normal wear and tear clause is working out for us. The biggest issues are checking it off one fire and into another fire, and tire ply. To be clear, the incident that orders it is responsible for paying for it.

Pam suggested creating an FAQ for folks in dispatch so they know the parameters of the solicitation. Highlight things such as – it is due back after the incident, it is unlimited mileage or straight mileage, etc. This should also be the expectation of ground support. Should have the IBA and the team give the responsibility to ground support to hire a resource to track these vehicles. Have the team take responsibility. Ground support is set up to do this.

We need to have a tabbed binder listing our expectations to hand to the team when they arrive, and include solicitation FAQs.

**Action Items:**

- Pam will take it on to create a draft FAQ binder and get it out to us.
- Jeff will go to SAC to talk about our solicitations.
- Jeff will put together FAQs highlighting the solicitation requirements of rental cars, and include that for state rented vehicle claims we pay the deductible only.
- Jeff will try to address the tire issue in the rental car solicitation
- Matt will discuss multi-tier porta-potty rates with Wesselius
- Terry will contact all SAC members and let them know Jeff's solicitation deadlines so he can gather up more comments regarding them.

## **Best Value – Matt**

This year we're working on Type 3 caterers. There was a big SAC discussion on this; GIS units, and mobile laundry. It is still up in the air because some areas have them, some don't. Also working on office and clerical support trailers, gray water trucks, services trucks and refer trailers. We're considering procuring refer trailers locally. Transports are being re-solicited this year. The ops committee is adamant about revisiting that.

Another issue was a faller module. It has been developed. They did away with the requirement for a work capacity test. Not sure how long we can hang in with the feds if they keep going down the road they are with national specifications. We do still have the option with state fires to give the team guidelines of hiring locally.

## **Fire Meals – Sue**

Small group met a couple months ago. The department recognizes we need to maintain the higher standard of fire meals. Have heard a lot from the field that we need to maintain the status quo of this year. We had planned to meet with the budget office. They recognize we have policy in the 300 manual. Will get with Ann Baucman in the next couple of weeks. If an individual in fire status is working a 2 week assignment, regardless of their position on the fire they should get the higher rate. It applies to those who are not relieved of duty. Think we are moving in the direction we need to and don't think there will be a fight since we're backed up by the national solicitation. We're not abusing the dollar amount. Just need to create guidelines on who can get the meal and when – specifically for support people, not suppression. The key is, have they been relieved from duty? Also need to create a guideline on how many extra lunches to order. We need to decide on the guidelines, get it into the 300 manual. A clause that says, due to the uncertainty of fire, authorize certain percentage of overage for ordered meals. No more than 20%? Need a list of names if ordering 10 or less lunches. Include the rule and the intent so folks know why it is important. Sue will add fire meal language in 300 manual regarding fire meals.

There is a need for us to document better as well, so it doesn't look like we all went out to dinner, when we actually sent someone down to pick it up. Need to put an area on the Restaurant Authorization form for justification and send out a cheat sheet of when you need to use the Restaurant Authorization form. Also need to throw in language for work rest guidelines with IC crews. Becky will add instructions to the Restaurant Authorization form.

Pam talked with Barb Powell about developing the Fire Business Website to include more information so folks will have a place to go to access minutes of the meetings, recommendations, forms, etc. We need this in order to get the word out.

What we decide here needs to go to FAC for approval. So we need to get these meetings scheduled more in line with the FAC group.

### **Action Items:**

- Sue will add new fire meal language in the 300 manual
- Becky will add clearer instructions to the Restaurant Authorization Form.

## **1:00 Lease Vs Buy**

Just put out the fires that lease vs. buy created last year. The auditors might pick it up. Jeff doesn't see a problem in doing this in the future as long as we follow the proper procurement process. Bruce had sent out some parameters a couple months ago. Lots to consider before you enter in to it, such as where it will be stored, etc. If we are going to do it on a regular basis then Jeff will put it in the Procurement manual. Not necessary to put it in 300 manual. You must make sure the funds you are using are valid for that type of thing. Jeff is concerned that the ATV thing might get hit by the auditors. As far as DoFA procurement goes, we are fine. We need to ensure that we have the flexibility to save the state some dollars, as that was what it was about, but in doing what we did we exceeded the authority of the delegated amount without going through DoFA. Procurement is okay with it but will see what the auditors think.

We need to get out the rules of supplemental dollars and make sure that everyone understands them. When items are purchased by supplemental dollars and fire, then those items can and will be used for fire in the future.

Must use the yellow book rates. Kurt's Polaris charged \$200/day when the yellow book says \$80/day. This was done because Kurt didn't have any rentals, it was brand new equipment. If you go over the yellow book amount for any reason there must be justification. Where it says commercial rates, you must get 3-5 bids. We should have some triggers in place that tell us when we need to solicit items. Perhaps we should put some language in there. We need to

be fiscally responsible and consistent. If the rates really aren't valid then they will be adjusted at the business level. Pam will see to it that ATV is addressed for Chapter 20.

Should we put adds in the papers to see if anyone is interested in our solicitation for bid of ATVs? Jeff can only solicit dealers and as a rule, dealers don't rent/lease so we may need to elicit others.

Lease to buy is something to do pre-season. Get the guidelines set pre-season. We can do purchases but do them pre-season and go through Procurement. Add it to our business training this year.

EFFs and short term workers (unless on an approver's list?) should not be allowed to sign contracts and negotiate claims obligating the State of Montana. Also, buying team people are given authority to go into agreements and to spend large amounts of money. These people need to be trained. We do ourselves and them a dis-service by not providing training. We need to put together solid business practices. It doesn't only happen in fire. The problem isn't with the EERAs, though standard clauses must be handed out and supplemental provisions written. The problem is with other types of contracts similar to the ATV one that we entered into. Within the DNRC, no one in the entire department is authorized to do this without going through legal.

Jeff will give a Procurement class. If someone misses the class then they can't write EERA's, or they must then have someone in authority sign off on them. Also we need to have this part of our business training every couple of years.

#### Action Items:

- Pam will address ATVs in Chapter 20
- Lease vs. Buy to be addressed at Business Training this year.
- Jeff will give a Procurement class

## 2:00 Payment documentation requirements

### Payment process discussion

### Payment Teams

#### Payment documentation requirements –Jeff

The feds are not requiring all the paperwork that we are. Jeff would be more than happy not to audit fire payments. Jeff should not be accountable for what he signs off on. Where is the accountability? Need to ask Ann Baucman. The auditors are looking at our manuals and making sure we are proceeding with business as outlined in our manuals. Jeff would be happy that documentation stayed at the unit or land office and he only got the invoice and the EERA. We can make a recommendation of where we want it to be but the ultimate decision is Ann's.

It was agreed that all documentation to still go to Jeff. Perhaps he just checks a percentage of them. Sue will discuss this with Ann. If Jeff makes payment he must have all the documentation supporting it. This was a fix recommended by the auditors and we need to stick with it. We spent the last couple years to get to this point so we should not back off on it now.

#### Payment Teams – Matt

Discussed NWLO office staff helping out at Chippy to get the finance package cleaned up. Pam can put in a severity request to get some folks to travel around as a payment team. Karel would rather have FTE to staff a person at home, rather than the emphasis on a team. Jeff suggested having our people show up at the fire at critical times, such as at the beginning to get the team started, at the hand off to help ease the new team in and at the close out. That way staff are not away from the units for long, but are assisting at critical times. We need to do a better job at giving teams guidelines.

We just need to tap into some people. Perhaps Water Resources, Accounting and Business folks from the university, volunteer fire departments? Fire wardens have grants for training folks to do this stuff so anyone from local government can apply for this money for training. Doug has the skinny on all this. Some of the admin folks in Missoula's fire department are interested. If we can, target state agencies.

Instead of the \$4K Sue agreed to provide last fall, Ted has some federal monies that would be better suitable for fire business training.

Bruce was going to check into track phones. Do we want to use track phones? Can we? SLO found them very helpful. Jeff thinks there may be a problem because there is no way to account for them. Jeff can ask about track phones, but he doesn't see the need. Verizon gives us phones. We should be using them and they are cheaper. There is no term to it. They'll give you what you need, the towers, the phones, etc. This is another great tip to add to our business website.

We must be very careful that we are only paying on original invoices, so we don't overpay. The unit pays the bills for its fires; no other unit or land office pays another home unit's bills.

#### Action Items:

- Sue will discuss payment documentation, and percentage that Jeff needs to audit, with Ann
- Pam will add tips to our Fire Business Website, including using Verizon phones and towers

### 3:35 Local Government

- Severity
- IRA's
- Pay Status

#### Local Gov't – Matt

It was agreed that severity for local gov't would be paid at 100% after 10 hours or if at PL5. We need to standardize the language. The wildland committee wants to stay at 50%. Best Value is still 75% and local gov't is 50%. We need to make sure it goes in Chapter 20 for non Best Value. Best Value equipment is under solicitation.

#### IRAs – Matt

Don't see any big changes. Will get them out in February so land office's can sign them up pre-season. Will switch around the IRA so that the Chief's Certification follows the Agreement, the Agreement to come first. The Fire Business website still calls it Local Gov't EERA. Need to fix that. These are electronic so if you can, get your departments to do this multi-year. There was a request for an additional sheet to add additional equipment and additional people. Will put it on the website. Try to get it all done pre-season. Alert those that need to know that they are available on the website.

#### Pay Status – Matt

Equipment is not being taken off the clock for lunch breaks. It is paid for the entire shift. In regards to payment – try to get their stuff processed in a timely manner. Need to put some language in there that they need to submit their payment documentation by a certain deadline, not to lapse into another fiscal year.

If signing up departments with fully operated contract, keep in mind there will be times we'll need them unoperated so do both. Also put in Chapter 50 that even hired fully operated the fire will pay travel, but only the per diem.

#### Action Items:

- Pam(?) To add new severity payment language for LGFF in Chapter 20 for non Best Value
- Matt to change wording on the Fire Business Website to reflect Local Gov't IRA, instead of EERA and also add an additional sheet to the IRA to list additional equipment and people. Perhaps also put language in there that LGFFs need to submit payment documentation in a timely manner – not to lapse into another fiscal year?
- Matt to add to Chapter 50 that even hired fully operated, the fire will pay per diem for travel

### 4:00 Chapter 50 Changes

- Trying to move everything that was referenced in Chapter 50, but was in Chapter 20, to be found just in Chapter 50.
- Page 10 - General Information. We're putting in some information regarding agency to agency billing and the rates used by cross billing agencies.
- Page 10 - Possible Hiring Methods. As far as mutual aid, out of jurisdiction, if they pass the mutual aid period, they have to ask if the fire still wants them, and if they do, they have to get a resource order and they will be paid from hour one.
- The Initial Attack agreements local gov't has with the FS will no longer be honored by DNRC. We will still do the dispatch ordered stuff, just not the handshake deals.
- Meals – added that equipment will be paid during meal breaks.
- Page 11 - Other Municipal City or County Gov't Agencies. If we hire folks they need to meet our quals. Added a clause saying we would be able to hire a grader or a water tender (if they didn't have the refresher) only if they were escorted by qualified people.
- Drivers - out of state incidents do require a CDL for operators.
- Page 11 - Local Gov't Fire Force Personnel. Put the minimum standards from the chart from Chapter 20 here in 50.
- Page 14 – Severity. To read as follows: Severity rates for LGFF equipment will be paid at 50% of the established hourly rate when in non-fire status. Shifts exceeding 10 hours in non-fire status will be paid at

100% or the full hourly rate. If the resource is mobilized to an incident, the payment will revert to the full hourly suppression rate for the entire shift.

- Rates will be updated and listed.
- Page 15 – We were going to remove reference to the NFPA but they wanted it left in there.
- The Compliment list will go in under Typing of Engines.
- Structure engines Type 1 and 2 cannot be signed up as wild land engines.
- Page 19 - Montana National Guard. Who pays? If sheriffs use the guard for something under their normal scope of operations (evacuations) then we are not on the hook to pay for them.
- Suggest adding drop tanks on page 21
- Add hand wash stations (SLO) to page 21 with Kitchens. Is our rate valid? Are we losing money? Bump the rate to \$750.
- Page 23 - Adding a section for ambulances, so we have the ability to contract out locally at a fully operated price for 24 hours.
- Will add a FAQ and basic guideline section at the end. If you have things to add to that send them in an email to Matt.

### **Wednesday January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 - 8:00 to Adjournment**

#### **8:00 FEMA Update, Cost Shares, APMC, Business Website**

##### **FEMA – Pam**

The City and County of Helena are not charging us for expenses so we're not moving forward on that with FEMA. Had one audit in December. It was from 2003 - \$30mm Missoula mineral zone. It is on hold right now but they may be back. They will come here in the next couple weeks to review the Hobble fire. We have a letter from FEMA saying there is no set threshold for structures destroyed. We usually have an annual conference call with them at the beginning of the season to let us know if anything has changed.

##### **Cost Shares**

Still have 4 that haven't been completed... battling over 2 of them. Will include Cost Share at the Business Workshop this spring.

FS doesn't want to do acres. BLM is still pretty good with acres.

##### **APMC**

Pam is working with Sue who is trying to get some answers from Worker's Comp. FS had some trouble with APMC this summer too. Trying to put together some guidelines for the upcoming year. Sue talked to State Fund; we had several claims this past fire season, whereby we had employees (mostly federal), that sought medical treatment and had tests done that were not really related to the illness. Talked with legal and Baucman and felt it was in our best interest to deny the claims (some of them preexisting things not related to fire). How to brief teams on what will be allowed and not allowed? How to police and monitor? Discussion with State Fund didn't provide much clarity other than we have the flexibility to proceed how we want to proceed. Pam got some guidelines from the feds and Sue is working with Phares to put some clear information in the 300 manual.

The group had a long discussion of whether or not we should even continue with APMC or if employees shouldn't be filing their claim with Workers Comp. Everyone on the fire should be covered by Workers Comp. Pam told NRCG that if we couldn't figure out how to make this work better than we would pull out of it. Our responsibility is to ensure that they get to the hospital; and their crew boss needs to go with them. Pam will also check with other states to see what they do. With the way medical care is these days, it is time we revisit this. (escalating medical costs, HIPPA) Only Workers Comp can see if the claim is even valid. We at the state are not able to make the call. Fed employees pay their Work Comp premiums anyway. We pay the fed salaries and benefits. We are paying for their coverage and then paying for the claim. It is wrong. Our recommendation is to pull out. Want to play nice, but not pay twice. We need to take our decision up through Ted to NRCG.

We will try to fight to get out of it, but if we don't win, how do we make it work? Perhaps have the IBA check in the medical tent twice a day? Stipulate that anytime there is an injury they need to contact a state rep? Perhaps we hire a private, certified consultant to track stuff down? We also need to send a note to our providers stating we've noticed abuse so they need to be careful to not get caught in it.

#### **9:45 EMT's**

Need to add language to Chapter 50 regarding medics practicing in Montana without medical control. The Section in Ch50 for ALS and BLS Ambulances. Matt will add the language in that section of Ch50.

**Action Items:**

- Pam to check with other states to see what they do regarding APMC
- Matt will add language in Chapter 50 regarding medics practicing in Montana without medical control and ALS and BLS ambulances

**9:48 IBA's  
Recommendations and Use for 2008**

The IBA role has become formalized and recognized and is well justified. How do we get a bigger pool of folks? We can look within the agency. There are people from divisions such as Water and CSD who are becoming more interested. We can't force people to do it, but if we can get people to commit to one assignment each season it would be helpful. But we need to maintain the integrity of the role in the eyes of the team. We need trained people out there.

We need to start new IBAs slow. Get them first connected with the fire world before hand. Start them out on Type 3 fires. IBAs have taken on a lot of the duties of the line officer. Maybe some of them should be attending line officer training. We need to teach the mechanics of how the teams work. We need to get leadership involved. The message has gotten to Ann and Mary and is sifting down.

We need to structure the training differently. New IBAs need more training, and seasoned ones need less. It makes sense to have different levels of training. Funding training - Ted has asked Pam to put together a package to take to the legislature and has set aside some funds in the meantime. It will be more of a multi-year plan. First get them started in fire business, finance and logistics, and get them at the camp in-briefings; involve them in other aspects of fire and send them out to shadow an experienced IBA ... and 5 years down the line they'll be seasoned. Every year we should have a new IBA class that includes abbreviated S260 & S261.

For our spring training this year we'll have a session for our experienced IBAs and nobody else, then a separate one for the new IBAs, then the business refresher. Suggest getting an RSVP list of who is attending and send out some pre-work to get them back into that thought process. Also find out from leadership who they want to send to our training and who they are unable to because of funding limitations. Sue will talk to Bob to see if we in business can take some of our topics to line officers training.

**10:30 Spring training!  
Needs, locations, topics.**

Becky and Jan will put together a mini S260/S261 class for new IBAs. We'll shoot for the week of April 21. Need to get it certified and can offer it up to local gov't folks too. Pam will look into getting it certified with Blankenship and will get info back to Becky and Jan. All of us need to see if we have any agency people or county people who are interested and give to Pam so she can get the info to Harrington in an effort to gather numbers of attendees.

- One day IBA training – Sue will present the IBA class. Must wait for the line officers schedule.
- 1/2 day Business Refresher – Pam will present.
- (Those that can't make these can get a local presentation from us reps on the committee for each area.)
- Procurement Road Show – Jeff (do we contact him or will he contact us for when we want him to come?)

**Action Items:**

- Sue will talk with Harrington regarding taking some of our business topics to Line Officers training
- Becky and Jan will put together mini 260/261 class for spring training
- Pam will look into getting it certified
- All of us need to find people interested in fire business and provide a number to Pam so she can get a head count of spring training attendees for Harrington's approval

## 11:00 Miscellaneous

Team accountability. Provide an outline at in-brief with solid information including FAQs and your expectations. Put someone in the finance tent to help them. Close out with finance prior to official close out. More direction from us. Jane Haker is still pushing a separate finance team evaluation. Suggest doing team evaluations after fire season is over. Need to put together that binder of stuff to give to the teams and each unit can tweak it with local buying information.

## Committee Recommendations to NRCG Committees

- DNRC to pull out of APMC.

## Action Items from Fall meeting (Action Items highlighted in PURPLE)

- Jeff giving Procurement class. Discussed pulling all hands when needed. Discuss fixing our accounting process, too many hands. **Karel will push it forward.** Discussed scanning documents so that access is much easier. They are already scanning lease agreements. Pam has been working with Tricia on it.
- **Put instruction sheet on the website for Restaurant Authorization form and add a spot on there to check if the meal is take out.**
- **Pam will do the guideline for feds to order local gov't.**
- Hired fully operated and then paid mileage and gas is indeed the way it is. Jane Haker knows all about it.
- **All of us tap into our areas to target more finance people and IBAs.**
- Chapter 50 changes.
- Price for a Forwarder will need to be negotiated. Not putting specialized equipment in Chapter 50.
- **Time under hire to be better explained on our website.** When they start time under hire can be determined at dispatch.
- **Add to Chapter 50 – "Not allowable for fire halls to feed their firefighters when camp is available."**
- Co-signing by feds won't change.
- Track phones discussed. Go with Verizon.
- Add language regarding medics practicing in Montana without medical control.